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# DEPARTMENT OF RED CROSS NURSING

IN CHARGE OF

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## EXPANSION OF RED CROSS PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

Red Cross Public Health Nursing Services have increased from 155 to 817. Red Cross public health nurses in active service have increased from 162 to 908. Scholarships have been awarded by the Red Cross to prepare graduate nurses for public health nursing. Boards of Health of thirty-five states have entered into definite working agreements with the Red Cross for the promotion of public health nursing. In some cases the state tuberculosis associations share in these agreements. In a majority of the remaining states, agreements are about to be reached.

In one community, alone, 193 operations were performed upon children for the removal of adenoids and tonsils, through the initiative of a Red Cross Chapter, and its public health nurse.

Not only has the Red Cross carried the idea of rural nursing to the most remote spots in the country, but it has proved the project to be a practical, definite and workable service for alleviating suffering. Public officials and private citizens convinced by the results already obtained are looking upon public health nursing as an indispensable public service and as the solution of the community problems that concern national life. With their coöperation the Red Cross increased the number of its public health services from 155 to 817. These figures prove the demand for further development of the work and the interest manifested in it to be genuine.

These 800 nurses added to the Public Health Service field staff is significant of an awakening consciousness to the need for better protection as the result of draft disclosures, influenza epidemics, and the work of the Children's Bureau. To know the resources of her community and state, and to carry on her work that she may enlist active interest and support of public officials and her local chapter is the endeavor of the public health nurse.

As an excellent example of what may be accomplished through the coöperation of the assembled agencies of the state and the American Red Cross, a remarkable piece of work was recently done in a New England town.

Through the initiative of the Red Cross, a public health nurse, and the coöperation of the local doctors, six clinics for the removal of

tonsils and adenoids were held and 193 operations were performed in one week. A throat specialist was brought from the city to supervise the work. At the period of maximum efficiency, the operating team consisted of a surgeon, a surgeon's assistant, three nurses, and four anaesthetists.

A former church belonging to the local school department and used for courses in manual training, cooking and for courses in public lectures, was transformed into a temporary hospital. The main room became a large ward for recovery, provided with cots and blankets and many screens to afford semi-private rooms. The adjacent cooking room was transformed into an etherizing and operating room. The building was the local school board's contribution to "better health" while the equipment, including cots, blankets, etc., were provided by the state as its seal of approval. The local Department of Education also lent class rooms in the high school across the street to afford waiting rooms for those about to be operated upon, for the parents who wished to be at hand when their child came out of ether, and for the workers. The Red Cross Chapter provided a free canteen and served meals. Volunteer automobile service under the auspices of the Red Cross returned the patients to their homes.

Advantage of these clinics was taken by all classes of the community. The clinics were organized with the coöperation of the local physicians on the plan of assigning the charge of a given clinic to a given physician who should then fill it with his patients, so far as possible, being assisted by other physicians. This enterprise was undertaken by the Red Cross on the basis of results formerly obtained by the examination of some 1200 children in the public and parochial schools by the public health officer and the public health nurse. About 400 operable cases were discovered. All the resources of the chapter and of the medical and nursing professions of the community were used in making this clinic a success. It will go down in the history of the town and chapter as a great public benefaction.

#### JOYS AND PRIVATIONS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE IN WINTER

Some of the thrills, privations and joys of the Red Cross public health nurse in winter are graphically sketched in the diary of Marjorie House, the public health nurse for Stephenson County, Ill. Miss House's description of a tour with the Farmers' Institute throws interesting side lights on what may be accomplished by the harmonious coöperation of the American Red Cross Public Health Service and the extension of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

A year ago I jaunted through the county with the Farmers' Institute, doing my share of the speaking, but when asked to go this year, I reluctantly refused because of other work especially pressing.

Just as I was about to leave my office on a county school trip, I was called on the phone by the institute manager who excitedly informed me that the woman from Chicago, who had been engaged to lecture, had fallen ill. "So," said he, "you must take the noon train for Noris, take charge of the woman's meeting at 1:30 o'clock, and speak at the general meeting this evening. Of course, you won't leave us in the lurch, and we will expect you to stay with us the whole week."

I felt the hand of the angel who guides my work,—or tried to. Therefore, after a rushing time in the office, getting the couldn't-be-left-overs done, I found myself on the train concentrating on some notes to be used in my speech for the afternoon meeting. Suddenly the conductor woke me to consciousness with a deep "Madam, this is Noris." Grabbing my impedimenta I made a tumbling exit from the train into the very arms of my receiving committee. A stiff breeze, whipping by just then, caught my precious notes and flew to space unknown with them. I let them go and tried to look happy while I pulled down my hat, capped my fountain pen, and explained to the wondering committee that I was not the "lady from Chicago."

One-thirty found the women assembled in one room in the town hall while the men retired to another part of the building to consult on ventilation and diet for cattle, and the eugenics of hog raising. Standing before these women I found only a few vague half-awakened ideas at first. However, they were my own people, this crowd of farmers' wives and all splendid women. I knew them and they knew me. So, with a short talk to give impetus to the dozens of questions and remarks which followed, we had a lively two hours, discussing social hygiene, the problems of venereal disease, and why and how to tell children the story of life.

Early the next morning, while it was still twelve below zero, we bob-sledded over the crisp snow to our next town, just six miles away. There our accommodations were the grubby little hotel and the dreary, barn-like town hall, of which two the latter was much more to be desired. The program was similar to that of the day before,—even as to the questions asked. The children had heard that their school nurse was coming to talk that night and felt it their duty to support her. As a consequence, every seat was filled and standing room was occupied to overflowing. An amusing picture was presented by the fringe of children's legs dangling from the platform.

After a melancholy night, with smokey lamps and no heat, in our odorous hotel bedroom, we took the six o'clock train in the morning to our next all day "stand." This day was colder and the roads here were more blocked with snow, making the attendance small. But as usually happens in small gatherings, formality vanished and the interest became more active and individual. The woman's meeting was especially successful, though only twelve were present. Definite plans were discussed for making the community safer and cleaner for boys and girls. Delegates from this meeting went to the churches, societies, and schools, and started a vigorous purity campaign which is bringing forth most gratifying results.

But the fifth and last day—it was wonderful. In the smallest town of all we had the largest crowds and the loudest enthusiasm. The evening found the hall jammed and packed. The proverbial country stove glowed red hot, but the windows remained nailed shut, tight for the rest of the winter. It was only after much cajoling that we succeeded in having two windows pried open, one on either side of the platform, so that the audience would not feel the air! The speakers had cold feet that evening but they kept it to themselves!

It was at the close of my talk, when the "Institute Troop" was feeling decidedly tongue weary and ready for bed, that someone in the audience unhappily remembered that the nurse told stories, and asked for one. There were encores and other requests. Not until an hour later, at ten-thirty, when dismissal was fairly thrust upon it, would the crowd take its departure.

Three weary "troopers" then waded through the dark and snow to the home which entertained them, only to be further entertained by family photographs, including all the relatives, the animals, and the real estate; then came pie—and mince, too; and then the complete repertoire of "pieces" which the daughter of the house had learned to pound out on the piano. It was one o'clock before we had been initiated to all the family prizes and were permitted to go to bed. I had a stove pipe going up through my room, the others had none. It was seventeen below zero that night and their blankets were thin. They basked in the memory of how warm they had been that evening on the platform when only their feet were cold!

The next morning found us bob-sledding back to civilization. The roads were impassable and the bumpy track wandered through hill and dale. We sat on the floor of the sled and braced our spines against the side. Stiff winds blew our noses scarlet but after jolting eleven miles, we arrived at the desolate station designated only by a milk can on the platform, and a name. After waiting almost a half hour, unsheltered and at the mercy of Boreas, the train arrived and the remainder of the journey was supremely happy and uneventful.

At my office the next morning, work was piled up and clamoring, but I know that the angel who guides my work—or tried to—knows better than I where the work is most needed.

#### CLASSES IN HOME HYGIENE PROVE A MEDIUM FOR RECRUITING STUDENT NURSES

Red Cross Classes in Home Hygiene and Care of the Sick are proving a productive medium for interesting young women in nursing as a profession.

According to a recent report from the Bureau of Instruction of the Lake Division, the following number of girls from the states included in the Lake Division, and the training schools they entered are listed: Indiana, two, Jewish Hospital, Louisville, Ky.; Kentucky, one each, Good Samaritan Hospital, Cincinnati, O., Jewish Hospital, Louisville, Ky., Good Samaritan Hospital, Lexington, Ky.; Ohio, one each, Canton Hospital, Canton, O., Flower Hospital, Toledo, O., Robinwood Hospital, Toledo, O.

The classes conducted under the auspices of the Red Cross at the Chautauqua Institute the past summer also proved a resourceful means of recruiting student nurses. Nineteen pupils received certificates and four have filed applications for entrance to nurses' training schools.